



Veterans-For-Change Newsletter

A Voice of the Veterans

Week Ending Sunday, June 26, 2016
Volume 7, Issue 23

This-N-That

As problems continue to mount in the VA Healthcare and Benefits system, the man who takes seat as the new Benefit Under Secretary of the VA, Mr. Thomas Murphy sky rocketed from Director of Compensation and Pension to Under Secretary in less than a year.

His only claim to fame is that his business background is working for Home Depot prior to the VA has come out making the boldest statement anyone in the VA Healthcare and Benefits system could ever make.

[AGENT ORANGE IS HARMLESS!](#)

His second claim to fame is that he was “holding the line” when it came to Blue Water Navy Veterans and C-123 Veterans on their claims for exposure/contamination of Agent Orange.

He bases his “opinion” on absolutely no scientific or medical evidence and he himself holds no medical or scientific degree what-so-ever making him the most dangerous person in the history of the VA.

I’m sure once you read the article, which so far there have been 32,323 people who have read it you will see what I see. This man **MUST** be removed from his position immediately, if not sooner.

And why I strongly urge you, even if you feel it’s a waste of time, effort and energy to please, call your Reps in DC and demand his removal. You can find phone numbers to use to make these calls further down in this newsletter.

You can call any time 24 hours a day, seven days a week. And I would also urge you to go to their websites and send a loud and clear message there too and tell them to remove this man from this position of power and from the VA employment.

Anyone with two cents worth of brains could tell that Agent Orange is the most toxic, most deadly of chemicals ever used in the Military by the evidence of all those whom we have lost, all those whom have become sick, and all the birth defects of their children, and grand children.

So it truly is imperative that each one who reads this, please, take action today! Flood their phone lines, and E-Mail in boxes, and if you have the ability, fax them too! We need to show that Veterans will no longer accept being treated like second class citizens.

Have you had a need to visit a VA Medical Center Emergency room in the past year? How long were you forced to wait until you were seen by a physician, or did you just leave due to the lengthy wait time involved without being seen?

Please, take the time to write your story and send it to me. This is yet another critical area of concern for VFC and another battle to fight.

No matter what era you served, where you served, what your illness is, YOU deserve to be treated with dignity, respect and seen in a timely manner.

I have read and heard from many Veterans who were forced to wait maybe as little as two hours, but some as many as nine hours.

I could possibly understand two hours if the ER is a busy one (not short staffed) and you were prioritized based on need, but to force Veterans to wait more than that is simply not acceptable under any circumstance.

On behalf of myself and Volunteers nationwide, we wish you and your family good health!

Respectfully,

Jim Davis

Founder

Jim.Davis@Veterans-For-Change.org

Women Veterans and Insomnia

A new study has found that more than 47 percent of female veterans reported symptoms of insomnia that resulted in functional impairment. Of this sample group, less than one percent had a diagnosis of a sleep disorder based on medical records. Data for this study were drawn from a random sample of female veterans using Veterans Health Administration primary care facilities. The research abstract is available in the [online supplement](#) of the journal *Sleep* and is entitled 'Prevalence and Associated risk Factors of Insomnia among Female Veterans'. The study was presented Sunday, June 12, 2016 and Wednesday, June 15, 2016 in Denver at SLEEP 2016, the 30th Anniversary Meeting of the Associated Professional Sleep Societies LLC (APSS).

DAV-Supported COLA Bill Introduced in the Senate

On June 8, 2016, Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Johnny Isakson (GA) introduced S. 3032-the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2016.

This bill, if enacted, would provide an increase, effective December 1, 2016, in the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC) for the survivors of certain disabled veterans.

This bill does not contain the round-down provision of previous years that reduced compensation and pension payments by millions of dollars -at the expense of disabled veterans and their families. Therefore, DAV strongly supports S. 3032.

Please use the prepared electronic letter or draft your own to urge your Senators to cosponsor S. 3032, and to urge the Senate Leadership to bring this bill to the floor of the Senate for a vote as soon as possible.

As always, we appreciate your support for DAV and your grassroots activism in participating in DAV CAN. Your advocacy helps make DAV a highly influential and persuasive organization in Washington.

Thank you for all you do for America's veterans and their families.

Click [HERE](#) to send your message!

Operation Mail Call



Operation Mail Call needs your help! We need cards and letters to send to our troops currently serving on foreign soil.

Doesn't have to be anything special, just words of support and thanking them for their service.

If you're a school teacher, please contact me at my E-Mail address at the top, our troops love to hear from kids too!

For more information, visit: <http://veterans-for-change.org/5439-operation-mail-call-2>

Government Accountability Reports

Controlled Substances: DEA Should Take Additional Actions to Reduce Risks in Monitoring the Continued Eligibility of Its Registrants. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-310>

Information Security: Agencies Need to Improve Controls over Selected High-Impact Systems. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-501>

Intelligent Transportation Systems: Urban and Rural Transit Providers Reported Benefits but Face Deployment Challenges. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-638>

Consumer Financial Protection Bureau: Additional Actions Needed to Support a Fair and Inclusive Workplace.
<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-62>

Combating Nuclear Smuggling: NNSA's Detection and Deterrence Program Is Addressing Challenges but Should Improve Its Program Plan [Reissued on June 20, 2016]. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-460>

Federal Air Marshal Service: Additional Actions Needed to Ensure Air Marshals' Mission Readiness.
http://www.gao.gov/restricted/restricted_reports

Army Working Capital Fund: Army Industrial Operations Could Improve Budgeting and Management of Carryover.
<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-543>

Defense Facility Condition: Revised Guidance Needed to Improve Oversight of Assessments and Ratings.
<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-662>

Defense Health Care: Availability and Quality Measurement of Women's Health Care Services in U.S. Military Hospitals.
<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-596>

Federal Prison System: Justice Has Used Alternatives to Incarceration, But Could Better Measure Program Outcomes.
<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-516>

Federal Real Property: Observations on GSA's Canceled Swap Exchange Involving Buildings in the Federal Triangle South Area. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-571R>

Identity Theft and Tax Fraud: IRS Needs to Update Its Risk Assessment for the Taxpayer Protection Program.
<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-508>

Drug Enforcement Administration: Additional Actions Needed to Address Prior GAO Recommendations.
<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-737T>

Veterans Affairs: Sustained Management Attention Needed to Address Numerous IT Challenges.
<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-762T>

To Contact your Members of Congress

To Call your Representative: 202-225-2305

To call your Senator: 202-224-3841 or 202-224-3553

To call different members of Congress: 202-224-3121

Toll FREE Number: 866-272-6622

Tuskegee Airman Laid to Rest

The Air Force recently paid its final respects to former 2nd Lt. Malvin G. Whitfield, an Army Air Forces and Air Force veteran, at Arlington National Cemetery. Whitfield was the first U.S. Military member to win Olympic gold medals while serving his country. Whitfield joined the Army Air Corps in 1943 as a Tuskegee Airman, one of more than 1,000 African-American pilots who fought in World War II. Whitfield later served as a youth and sports affairs officer for the U.S.

Information Agency. Whitfield was 91 when he died on Nov. 19, 2015. For more information about 2nd Lt. Whitfield, visit the Wikipedia [website](#).

Phoenix VA Officials Removed

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) today announced that it has removed three senior officials at the Phoenix VA Health Care System. The move follows an announcement in March in which VA proposed the removal of Lance Robinson, the facility's Associate Director; Brad Curry, Chief of Health Administration Service; and Dr. Darren Deering, Chief of Staff. In addition to other causes, the three were removed for negligent performance of duties and failure to provide effective oversight for not ensuring veterans were either properly scheduled for appointments or placed on an appropriate wait list. Mr. Robinson and Mr. Curry have 30 days from the effective date of their removal to file an appeal. Dr. Deering has 15 days.

VA Loses in Disabled Vets Contract Dispute

The Department of Veterans Affairs failed to comply with a law aimed at increasing the number of federal contracts awarded to small businesses owned by disabled veterans, a unanimous Supreme Court ruled Thursday. The justices sided with Kingdomware Technologies Inc., a veteran-owned contractor based in Maryland that said it should have been considered to provide services for a VA medical center. [The case](#) is important to veterans groups that claimed the VA was wrongly interpreting bidding requirements in a way that deprived thousands of small companies owned by veterans. Those companies want a slice of the billions of dollars in contracts the VA awards every year.

Lawmakers Begin Discussion to Reconcile Defense Policy Bill

The Big Four -- House and Senate chairmen and ranking members of the armed services committees -- met Thursday to begin negotiations on a final fiscal year 2017 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).

According to reports, committee leaders discussed potential schedules for future meetings and highlights on various policy differences.

At stake are decisions on a number of quality of life reforms including:

Pay Raise for active duty personnel - The House bill supports a 2.1 percent January raise to match wage growth in the private sector. The Senate voted to cap the raise, for a fourth consecutive year, at 1.6 percent.

TRICARE Reform: The Senate agrees with the administration plan to increase TRICARE fees for under-age-65 retirees. Both bills also would require all current TRICARE Standard users to enroll annually to help better manage costs and resources. The House, however, would subject only new entrants to the military on or after Jan. 1, 2018, to higher TRICARE enrollment fees.

Commissary Reform: The Senate approved the same sweeping changes endorsed by the House to modernize commissary operations. They include a pilot program to replace the cost-plus-five-percent pricing formula with variable pricing across local markets. Both chambers also endorse allowing the Defense Commissary Agency to offer its own brand products to generate more profits and enhance patron savings, and to convert commissaries to non-appropriated fund activities like exchanges.

Meanwhile, DoD last week gave Congress a promised report on prospects for making commissaries and exchanges “budget neutral” or self-sustaining. It concludes that budget neutrality is unattainable without gutting the benefit. This helped to weakened support for a privatization test.

Neither the House nor Senate has appointed conferees on the defense policy bill, though Senate Chairman John McCain (R-AZ) said he hoped to do that soon in the Senate.

Source: NAUS

AAFES 'Alaska Cruise' Sweepstakes

Shoppers with the Army & Air Force Exchange Service have the opportunity to visit Alaska by cruise next year thanks to Harry & David. Through July 7, authorized shoppers in the continental United States can enter to win a cruise for two Alaska, valued at \$8,000, at the Shop My Exchange [website](#). The prize package includes cruise tickets, airfare and \$500 in spending money. The winner will be drawn on or about July 14. No purchase is necessary to enter or win.

Oppose Drastic Cuts to Housing

The Senate passed version of the FY 2017 Defense Authorization bill (S. 2943) would reduce Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) payments for stateside service members who are married, or who share off-base housing. It would also limit payments to what the individual actually pays or the BAH, whichever is less.

The House version of the FY 2017 Defense Authorization bill (H.R. 4909) does not contain these provisions. Please use the Action Center to ask your U.S. Representative to oppose these Senate provisions in the final Defense Authorization bill.

[Take Action Today](#)

Veterans fought for us; we continue to fight for our Veterans!

Memorial Foundation Seeks Women Veterans

The Women In Military Service For America Memorial Foundation has built the largest registry of service women in the world. However, the registry includes less than 10 percent of the 3 million women who have served. The Memorial Foundation is seeking more names for the registry. They ask current and former service women to add their names and stories, and members of the public to share the names of family and friends. There is a suggested minimum donation of \$25 to be part of the registry. For more information, visit the Women In Military Service For America Memorial Foundation [website](#).

Veteran Crisis Resources

Veterans Crisis Line 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1
Military Crisis Line 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
National Call Center for Homeless Veterans
1-877-4AID-VET (424.3838)
VA Caregiver Support Line 1-855-260-3274

New Online Courses on New Military Retirement

The Department of Defense (DoD) has released the first of four online training courses that provide education about the military's new blended retirement system, which goes into effect Jan. 1, 2018. The first training course is specially designed for leaders, so they can understand the new blended retirement system before service members are introduced to it. The Leader Course (J3OP-US1330) is posted to [Joint Knowledge Online](#) (common access card required) and will be posted to Navy e-Learning soon. Three other web-based training courses for financial specialists, new accessions and those who are eligible to opt-into the new system will be released in the coming months. To learn more about the new retirement system, visit the [Military Compensation website](#) or view the [DoD's information graphic](#) on the blended retirement system.

Paws4Vets' Assistance Dog Program

Paws4Vets places customized assistance dogs with veterans and military dependents living with various disabilities. Through the Paws4Vets Assistance Dog Placement Program, Veterans, Active-Duty Servicemembers or their dependents with physical, neurological, psychiatric or emotional disabilities can receive Medical Alert Assistance Dogs-Psychiatric, Mobility Assistance Dogs and Specialized Partner Dogs (Emotional Support Animals). For more information, visit the Paws4Vets [webpage](#) and follow Paws4Vets on [Facebook](#).

Veterans-For-Change Website

If you haven't visited in a while, maybe you should visit today! Since we went back on-line in October 2012 average visitors have been around 1,700 per day and we've had a total of **2,838,425** visitors.

If you subscribe you will have full access to the entire website and best of all it's **FREE** of charge! You just need a valid E-mail address so the system can send you a confirmation E-Mail. Once received, click on the link to be authorized automatically.

We feel we have the largest One-Stop-Shop Veterans website available, and 100% user friendly.

There are era Forums, VA Forums, Mental Health Forum with a licensed clinical worker, and much much more!

www.veterans-for-change.org

◆ Documents Library with over 15,000 documents on-line (Updated: **06/13/16**)

- ◆ FAQ's with more than 1,600 FAQ's and answers (Updated: **02/20/16**)
- ◆ Multiple Forums
- ◆ Job Postings (Updated: **06/20/16**)
- ◆ Memorial Pages (Updated: **01/02/16**)
- ◆ News (Articles On-Line: **5,814**)
- ◆ Polls
- ◆ Web Links, more than 3,436, Added 1 New Links (Updated: **06/05/16**)

If you have a submission for the memorial pages, E-Mail: Jim.Davis@veterans-for-change.org

Report Looks at Veteran Transition

A new report by the RAND Corporation sifts through a wealth of studies it conducted over the last decade to highlight findings about veterans' transition and reintegration. The report, Ten Frequently Asked Questions About Veterans' Transitions, found that veterans succeed in the work force and earn more than civilians. The report also found that only half of those who sought mental health care received minimally adequate treatment, but there is evidence that the effects of post-traumatic stress disorder on productivity and earnings may be smaller than previously thought. The report is available on the RAND Corporation [website](#).

Ride 2 Recovery for Veterans

Ride 2 Recovery is a non-competitive cycling event is designed to get veterans back on the road with their brothers in arms. The non-profit is a free recovery, rehabilitation, and reintegration service for injured veterans. A Ride 2 Recovery Honor Ride will take place on August 14, 2016 in Barrington, Ill. It begins at Citizens Park at 7:00am. There is also a 10K Run at 9:15am. Registration for all cycling routes is \$75. The 1-mile fun run is \$25, while the 5K and 10K are each \$55. Wounded veterans ride and run for free. Please contact before registering at honorrideinfo@ride2recovery.com. For more information visit the Ride2Recovery [website](#).

Private Label Products Coming to Commissaries

Karen Jowers of Military Times reports that Commissary customers will start seeing some private label products on shelves later this year, according to the Defense Commissary Agency.

“DeCA plans to start phasing in private label products during the first quarter of [fiscal 2017],” said DeCA spokesman Kevin Robinson. The first quarter starts in October.

Private label products are sometimes referred to as “generic” products, usually costing less than national name brands.

Officials issued a “Notice to the Trade” on June 20 announcing that DeCA will accept presentations from interested companies July 18-22. The agency is seeking a company — or companies — to implement the private label program that will include all commissaries, all departments and categories of products currently stocked, according to the notice. While the notice stated the contract would start on October 1, it didn't specify when products should start appearing on the shelves.

Commissaries have long sold brands that are similar to private label brands, the same as are sold in some civilian stores, and offered a cost savings, but they were not developed by the commissary agency.

DeCA's notice states the private label requirements may include the adoption of an already existing trademarked brand, the development of a DeCA brand or a combination of both. The company chosen will be responsible for finding sources for the products, developing the program and implementing it.

Officials will use merchandising agreements for the process, not a contract, "because that is the instrument that is traditionally used for resale acquisitions of this nature," Robinson said.

Source: NAUS

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<https://twitter.com/Veterans4Change>

One VET, One Career, Many Successes.



Events for our VETERANS

- ◆ Resume Services and Career Mentorship
- ◆ Self employment and Entrepreneur Mentoring
 - ◆ VA Benefits Review and Counseling

- ◆ Training and education opportunities
- ◆ Employment opportunities with Americas top companies

Wednesday – July 6, 2016
10:00 – 2:00

VFW Fort Sill Post 5263
103 NE 20th Street
Lawton, Oklahoma 73507

VETERANS, PLEASE PRE-REGISTER FOR FREE!

Veteran Event Registration

Please contact us on

Mobile: (978) 973-0025

Office: (772) 763-0002

Email: admin@vetswork.net

For more details, visit our website: www.vetswork.net

TRICARE and Natural Disasters

TRICARE has resources you can access in the event of a natural disaster. In emergencies, the Department of Defense (DoD) can approve a waiver of primary care manager (PCM) referrals, which allows affected beneficiaries to get care from TRICARE-authorized providers without a PCM referral. The "Emergency Refill Too Soon" waiver authorizes early prescription refills, which will be announced on the TRICARE website. Everyone should have an emergency "Go To" kit with a list of prescriptions, shot records, and the numbers of family doctors and the regional contractor. Visit the TRICARE [website](#) for details on how to stay safe and get the care you need in a disaster.

Links to Other Stories

- 1) [Amid attacks, Trump promises new focus on Vets issues](#)
- 2) [AWARD: Veterans Affairs Most Secretive Agency In 2016](#)
- 3) [Butterflies Symbolize Hope for Paralyzed Veterans](#)
- 4) [Chelmsford Man Convicted of Defrauding Disabled Veterans Program of More Than \\$100 Million](#)
- 5) [Federal Investigation Yields Multiple Convictions In Connection With Bribery Of Veterans Affairs Contracting Officer](#)
- 6) [Former director of Cleveland VA Medical Center sentenced to nearly five years in prison for taking money from design firm](#)
- 7) [House Republicans to Release ACA Alternative; CMS Issues Proposed Rule to Improve Quality of Care](#)
- 8) [Houston Veterans Waited for Care After VA Cancelled Appointments](#)
- 9) [Local VA employees, Veterans protest privatization of Veteran health care](#)
- 10) **[NEW ACTING VA BENEFITS UNDERSECRETARY SAYS AGENT ORANGE IS HARMLESS!](#)**
- 11) [No More Fast-Track Firing At Veterans Affairs](#)
- 12) [Oregon DOJ's Medicaid Fraud Unit Prosecutes Fiduciary who Targeted Veterans](#)
- 13) [Texas VA medical center accused of falsifying Veteran wait times](#)
- 14) [Veteran groups blast Senate plan to scale back preferential hiring](#)
- 15) [Veterans deserve a VA that works for them](#)

- 16) [Veterans frustrated over delayed, denied disability claims](#)
- 17) [Veterans seeking care face wait times, denials](#)
- 18) [Watchdog: Phoenix VA needs system to cut down on long ER wait times](#)

You can help VFC by reading articles posted and commenting at the bottom and rate the articles. If you don't have an account, sign up today, it's FREE. Your comments and rankings tell us what type of information you want most.

Check us out today: www.veterans-for-change.org

New Contractor for TRICARE Dental Program

United Concordia will be the next TRICARE Dental contractor for active-duty families, National Guard and Reserve members and their families beginning May 1, 2017.

The contract is worth \$2.9 billion and will last for five years.

Under the new contract, the annual maximum benefit for users will expand from \$1,300 to \$1,500, according to contract documents. Sealants, which currently carry a 20 percent cost share, will be completely covered at zero out-of-pocket cost. Beneficiaries, who must pay monthly premiums to use TRICARE's dental program, will continue to receive two free cleanings a year, while pregnant users will be able to receive three.

Some beneficiaries may have to find a new dentist after the change, since individual dental practices determine which programs they accept. Details regarding in-network dentist options are likely to be released before the contract start date next year.

About 1.8 million beneficiaries are enrolled in the dental program.

Source: NAUS



Are you seeking employment? Been looking and not found the right job?

Well Veterans-For-Change is working hard to bring you more information on Job Fairs and Job postings available across the country.

<http://veterans-for-change.org/documents-library/category/167-job-fairs-job-postings>

If you're an employer and have a job to post, send an E-Mail to: Jim.Davis@veterans-for-change.org

~We Proudly Support our Military Personnel & Families~

GAO Says VA Needs to Modernize IT System

According to a Government Accountability Office report published on June 22, 2016, the Department of Veterans' Affairs healthcare system is due for some modernization in its IT department.

In February 2015, the Government Accountability Office designated the VA healthcare system as a "high-risk area" because it was unable to ensure safe and quality healthcare to veterans.

One of the reasons for this designation was the VA's inability to modernize its IT system.

The outpatient appointment scheduling system proved to be outdated, there were no signs of development for a system that would electronically sort information on surgical implants, and the system was not able to easily exchange information with the Department of Defense.

These failures contribute to the "timeliness, quality, and safety" of VA medical care.

In addition, there have been recent increases in utilization of VA care, according to the watchdog report, which has made it difficult for the VA to process claims quickly. The VA has no plans to modernize this process either.

Even though the VA has shown significant failures in its IT system, it has still spent billions of dollars on its modernization. The GAO, consequently, calls into question the VA's use of funds.

The GAO states the necessity of modernization in the VA IT department so veterans are served in a timely and effective manner.

Source: NAUS

If you received this newsletter as a courtesy or a forward from a friend or relative, you can sign up to receive in your E-mail every week.

<https://gem.godaddy.com/signups/193302/join>



Veterans-For-Change, Inc.

Riverside County, CA

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www.Veterans-For-Change.org

Serving those who served!

Please pass on to all your Veteran Friends and Family

Distribution	
Express Mail	144,478
Boston	68,572
Courtesy Copies	3,500
Department of VA	13,309
DoD	12,008
Face Book Pages	3,298
Google	4,188
Los Angeles	118,096
Microsoft	3,378
New York	133,775
Other Social Media	24,904
San Francisco	67,981
Twitter	32
US House of Reps & Staff	829
US Senators & Staff	96
University of So. California	3,578
US Air Force	29,801
US Army	44,872
US Marines	22,147
US Navy	21,019
Veterans	19,062,190
Washington DC	131,152
Yahoo	134
	19,913,337